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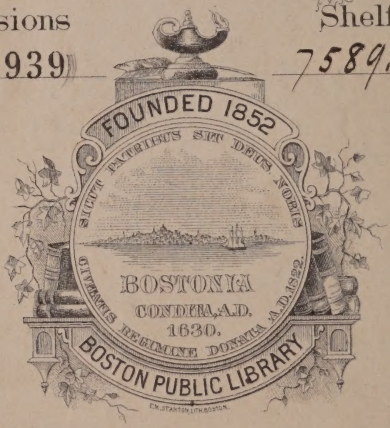

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Melancholy Examples

AND

FRIENDLY ADVICE.

The melancholy event of the murder of JONATHAN HOUGHTON, one of the watchmen of this city, on the 10th of December, 1825, by JOHN HALLORAN, who is to be executed on Friday, March 3, 1826, ought not to pass by without making a salutary impression on the public mind, relative to that most alarming and prevalent habit which exists among all classes of our community—*Intemperance.*

In the hope of arresting the attention of such persons as have unfortunately fallen into the awful practice which has brought HALLORAN to an untimely end, and also to induce all to be on their guard against this most insidious and fatal enemy to human nature,—the excellent charge of Chief Justice PARKER is here presented to the serious consideration of *Young* and *Old*, *Heads of Families*, *Rich* and *Poor*, and *all* who have the temporal, to say nothing of the still more important spiritual, happiness of their fellow beings at heart.

The case of JAMES REYNOLDS recently executed at *New-York*, for the murder of Capt.

WEST, which is here briefly noticed, is one more, out of many which might be selected, to show the fatal effects of the *vice* under consideration, and also of bad company.

What is it sends to the house of correction, in this city, hundreds every year, of both sexes, from the youth of twelve or fifteen years to the grey hairs of three score? The answer has again and again been given, "I got a little too much"—"It was ardent spirits first led me astray;" and directly or indirectly it is the prevailing cause of most of the crimes, which lead so many to our *prisons*, and not a few to the *Gallows*, as in the affecting cases of Halloran and Reynolds.

JUDGE PARKER'S CHARGE.

Prisoner!—It is with more than common feelings of regret and compassion that we approach the last act of duty imposed on us by the law, that of awarding its sentence for the heinous and aggravated crime you have committed.

We have learned in the course of your trial, that you are a stranger among us, and that during your residence here, until the act for which you were brought to the bar of justice, your conduct and character have been praiseworthy.

Having come from a country whose superabundant population, compared with the means it affords for their support, has compelled many, like yourself, to seek protection and employment here, it is most distressing to us to declare the judgment which must destroy all your hopes of life and liberty in a country of freedom and prosperity.

It has ever been the policy of the United States to receive and protect strangers, who on account of discontent with their condition at home, or the hope of more sure reward for their industry, have come to our shores for refuge, or to increase their means of happiness.

They have been welcomed to the blessings of our happy institutions, admitted to a fair competition with our own citizens in their efforts of industry and enterprize, have enjoyed perfect security of liberty and life, and of the fruits of their labor, and have been postponed in the exercise of political rights only until time should have familiarized them to our regulations and customs, and have rendered them capable of the duties of free citizens. Nor is it denied that the benefit of this public hospitality has been in a manner reciprocal.

Many of your countrymen have been exemplary for patient endurance of severe labor, for industry, for peaceable, temperate, and orderly lives.

Under the particular guidance and advice of their spiritual father and friend in this city in particular, it is believed that no class of laborers, so numerous, have been more regardful of the laws, or more generally decent in their deportment; and those who have thus conducted, find themselves blessed with prosperity, able to maintain their families, and lay up little stocks for future exigencies of sickness or age. But it is a melancholy truth, in regard to many, that the unrestrained use of liquor, has exposed them to poverty and all the evils of a profligate life, so that the wretchedness they fled from has found no relief in the country of their choice; for in no country can the habitual drunkard be shielded from the ruin and disgrace which awaits him.

Many of your countrymen, who have sought an asylum here, have used the liberty they found here, for their own destruction, wasting their hard earnings in dissipation and vice, bringing on premature disease and death, or have been saved from perishing only by public charity.

Alas! what havoc has this fiend intemperance, made among those who bear the image of the Almighty, and breathe his spirit!

Young men! who are not yet irrecoverably gone in this destructive vice, look at the picture it continually presents—disease, disgusting deformity of features, degraded characters, expulsion from all decent society, ignominious death—these are what you are to suffer as the price of that most loathsome vice.

It was, without doubt, this fatal enemy to man's innocence, which enticed you from your home on the evening preceding the barbarous attack you made upon poor Houghton—a man faithfully discharging his perilous duty of guarding the city in the hours of darkness and sleep—a man who had never offended you in the slightest manner, and whose person was wholly unknown to you; and yet this unoffending being you stole upon unawares, and by a giant's stroke, with an instrument used for the slaughter of beasts, you felled to the ground, forcing with the violence of the blow, the ribs through the tender organs of life.

Who but one made furious by that poison of the soul, whose ravages have been described, could have done a deed like this—without provocation, or even the motive of revenge, propelled on by that general malice which seeks for human blood, indifferent from whose heart it flows. And shall it be said that this self-created madness shall excuse, or even palliate the acts which it causes? Shall the enraged and furious drunkard kill and go free of punishment, because he has destroyed his reason? God forbid! that so dangerous an opinion should prevail—God forbid! that to the incentives to intemperance, already so powerful, should be added that of impunity of crime—God forbid! that man should be allowed to make himself a brute, that he may devour and destroy without being called to account.

No! the law allows of no such absurdity as that one crime shall excuse another, but holds every man accountable for the right use of his reason, in resisting the temptation to drink, as well as in avoiding such acts as drunkenness provokes.

Your counsel in the faithful execution of their trust towards you, did not deem it their duty to take so untenable a ground of defence. They did assert, that if a man of temperate habits, should by accident or misfortune become intoxicated, and in the absence of reason, thus produced, should commit a violence, the humanity of the law would excuse him. You have had the benefit of this principle; but we are constrained to say, that the jury were entirely justified in finding no room, from the evidence to apply it. The long interval of time from the

period when it was suggested you may have taken spirit, for relief from fatigue and cold, to the time when Houghton was murdered, forbids the belief that this partial intoxication, if it existed, was then in operation; so that the conclusion could not be avoided, either that you were in the possession of your reason when the act was done, or if intoxicated, it was a voluntary intoxication, acquired during the night.

The only other ground of defence urged by your counsel, that you were provoked to this deed by an assault from one of the watchmen, was wholly unsupported by evidence. If you had been assaulted in the manner supposed, the going home for an instrument of death, and the fatal use of that instrument, in the manner proved, would wholly remove this ground of defence. We are entirely satisfied that the verdict of the jury is such as was required by their oaths, in regard to both the points of the defence.

The course of the trial has been such as would have been used towards any of our own citizens accused of a similar crime. Counsel of your own selection have defended you as well as the case would allow, and there is no ground that we can see for suspending the judgment.

The humanity of the law allows you some time, though not a long one, to prepare for death. It is a solemn interval, and ought to be employed in examining your past life and recommending yourself to the mercy of your offended God. Though probably bred up under a form of religion different from ours, you belong to the same family of Christians, and many of the cardinal principles of your religion and ours agree. You believe in God, the Maker of Heaven and Earth, the hater of sin and avenger of crimes—in a Saviour, through whose mediation the most heinous sins may be forgiven if repented of and forsaken.

To the mercy of that God and that Saviour we recommend you—and now that we have said to you all that your situation requires, we proceed to pronounce the sentence of the Law.

That sentence is, that you be carried from the bar to the prison from whence you were taken—from thence, on the day to be appointed by the Executive power of

the State, to the place of execution, where you are to be hanged by the neck until you are dead. And may Almighty God, of his infinite grace and mercy, have compassion on your soul.

The *case of James Reynolds*, executed a short time since in the city of *New York*, is a solemn warning to the *young*, to avoid *intemperance and bad company*, as the following will shew. On arriving at the place of execution, the prisoner was conducted by the Sheriff to the scaffold. After looking around and gazing intently up the spectators, he delivered a short, but very feeling address, principally directed to the *young*, warning them to profit by his sad example, and to refrain from vice and evil company. He was born in the state of Massachusetts in the year 1803. His mother died about five years since; his *father*, *two brothers* and *two sisters*, are still living. He was brought up to the business of a baker, but did not follow it long. In March last he went to the city of New York and there married a wife, who, with his father, brothers and sisters he left to mourn his unhappy and untimely end, brought about (as he himself confessed) by *bad company*, who led him to "*houses of ill fame.*" He was a young man of fair complexion, about five feet four inches high, full faced, robust countenance, dark brown hair and eyes, and seemingly incapable of committing any crime. On Friday, October 21, he made a full confession of his crimes to the Clergyman who visited him previous to his execution. When he first

began to relate over the particulars, he burst into a flood of tears, and said, I feel miserable beyond every thing, when I think of the awful crimes I have been guilty of.

Thus died at the age of 22 years this truly unfortunate young man, who if it had not been for giving way to the temptation which *intemperance* exposed him to might have lived respectably and died happy.

"*New-York Bridewell, Oct.* 21, 1825.

"I confess to you, in the presence of God, and his holy angels, that I am a guilty man. I murdered captain West on Saturday morning, before day light. He went to bed perfectly sober, and remained asleep during the night.—About day break I went into the cabin, took an axe in my hand, and struck him a blow on the head, which instantly killed him. I was alone—in all this there was not a person with me, nor on board, when it was committed. I do also certify, that I was instigated to the whole of this by Townsend, a wicked man, and an old offender, as I have been informed. He proposed the thing to me two or three times in a joking way, before a thought of the kind entered my heart—he said, what an easy matter it would be to kill West, and get all his money. He expected, no doubt, that he had a large sum about him, but he was mistaken; for captain West told me, that he had left all he had, pretty much, in the hands of a grocer, whose name I do not recollect at present; I think the sum was four or five hundred dollars. I heard the grocer say, he would want to borrow part of it from the captain. I took from captain West's pocket, forty or fifty dollars, which was all the money he had with him. I then dragged the dead body on deck, without any assistance, where I tied a stone to his feet and a blanket around his head, and threw him overboard on Saturday evening. This was done without a moment's reflection. The day previous I had no intention to kill him; his money did not induce me to it;

for, first, I knew he had but little about him; and, secondly, I did not stand in need of any, for I had enough, and to spare. Thirdly, the captain was very kind and friendly to me. He told me whenever I wanted money to call on him and I should have it; so that it was a momentary temptation, and I gave way to it. I was but about two weeks in his employ when the murder took place, and this is the first crime of the kind I have been guilty of; and when I tell you, sir, that it is scarcely one year since I have been led astray, I suppose you will be surprised. My poor mother frequently said to me, when young, and when any person had been guilty of such a crime, "*my child, they are well guided whom God guides*"—but God was not in all my thoughts at this time. Had I taken *her* advice, I should never have been where I now am; but now it is too late. One year ago I went to church twice or three times every Sabbath, I shunned bad company, and evil of every kind; but, unfortunately for me, I was led from one evil to another, until at length I fell in with Townsend, who was the means of my ruin, and the cause of an ignorant youth imbruing his hands in an innocent man's blood, and this, when he was asleep and under my protection; but I freely forgive him, and every man, as I hope to be forgiven by my Saviour. I first neglected going to church, profaned the holy Sabbath, fell in with wicked and bad company, who led me to houses of ill fame, and thence to the gallows.

"I have made you my confidant in this confession, because God has made it my duty. I wish you to publish it on the day of my execution, and not before, in any of the papers you think proper, that young and old, rich and poor, may take warning by me, and never come to this untimely end.

(Signed) JAMES REYNOLDS."

The following is extracted from a letter which the unfortunate man addressed to his wife, a short time previous to his execution.

"*My Dear Wife*—Our union on earth has been but of short duration—death will soon dissolve it, and launch

my poor soul into a world of spirits, (in the twenty-second year of my age.) Before you receive this letter, I shall be in eternity.....O that I had my life to live over again, and then it should all be spent in the service of God; but it is too late, my days are past, my purposes are ended, and I am gone for ever. My last, my dying request to you, my dear, is to prepare to meet thy God. This will be sent to you by the clergyman alluded to. I have made a free and full confession of all my guilt to him; he will publish it in one of the papers on the day of my execution, and not before; that my mind may not be disturbed by it while living.....I am yours while living, and shall be equally so when dying.

JAMES REYNOLDS."

The following concluding remarks in the Rev. Mr. *Ware's* address before the Massachusetts Society for the suppression of Intemperance, are very appropriate and impressive, and cannot fail to produce a salutary effect upon all who read and duly consider them.

"How thoroughly must the good affections be palsied, and the moral sense destroyed, when this brutalizing enjoyment has become more desirable to a man, than all the rich pleasures which flow from home, friendship, health, and reputation! What an enormity of sin must he have to answer for, who has depraved himself so far, that, when all the felicities of a rational and social being are put in one scale, and those of a beastly self-indulgence in the other, he chooses the last, strips himself of decency and honor, puts out the light of reason, flings off the attributes of a man, and rushes into all the wickedness of voluntary insanity, disgusting idiocity, and profane beastliness—disgraces his friends, beggars his family, initiates his children in the dispositions and pathway of hell, becomes the corrupter of youthful purity, and a public teacher of debauchery—with no disposition to engage in good pursuits, and no power to attend to the

things which concern his peace, or to take one step toward the salvation of his soul! What can be said of such a man, but that his present and eternal ruin are complete? Earth curses him, while he is upon it, and beyond it he can see no prospect but that of the blackness of darkness. *A drunkard cannot inherit the kingdom of God.*"

REFLECTIONS.

The reflections which naturally suggest themselves after reading the foregoing are, that *parents* and all others who have the care of *children* and *youth* should be careful to know where they pass their time when not at school, or engaged in their daily occupations, and particularly during the *evening*, for "idleness is the parent of many vices." Oh ye parents and guardians of the young, you are exhorted to be watchful over those committed to your care, and to exhibit before them a temperate, industrious and good example—never let them hear the hallowed name of God profaned by lips which ought to teach them the way to be happy. Let parents be vigilant in checking the first departure from *truth* and *honesty* in their children—let them be watchful that they constantly attend school, and fail not to correct them for truanting, a neglect of which has led many children to shame, and caused, when too late to save the effect, many a parents heart to suffer anguish and sorrow. Notwithstanding our primary and other schools, too many parents neglect to send their children to school and suffer them to grow up in vice and igno-

rance. As our city authorities are about providing for a considerable class of children, too ignorant for our grammar schools, and unqualified by age to enter the primary schools (being over seven years,) it is hoped that the next step will be to take care of all children whose parents neglect their instruction, and suffer them to grow up to be pests in society.

Much is here said on the subject of parents watching the conduct of their children, because it is a most lamentable and awful fact, that many parents instead of training up their children in the way they should go, grossly neglect their duty and suffer them to live with no object in view.

Instances are very frequent in this city, of boys from the ages of from 8 to 18 years, being sentenced by our police and municipal Courts to the House of Correction in Leveret street for various terms of confinement, from a few days to many months; and at various times during the past year from twenty to thirty youth, of both sexes, have been the inmates of that place at the *same time*, and probably during a year, over *one hundred* girls and boys go and come from that establishment, generally not improved by a residence with older offenders. It is cause of great joy that this evil will be speedily corrected, as the guardians of the public welfare, have already progressed considerably in the plan of preparing a place at 'South Boston' for "Juvenile delinquents," which will doubtless be so conducted, as to

produce a reformation among those unfortunate youths. What the feelings of those parents are, on hearing of the situation of their children when confined within the gloomy walls of a prison, is known to but a few, whose duty leads them frequently to witness the truly affecting scene of a *Father* or *Mother* visiting and weeping over a son or daughter, after being sentenced to the House of Correction.

Even the youths of 8, 10, 12, &c. who at this early period fall into crime, most frequently do it while under the influence of ardent spirits. Banish intemperance, and in its train would follow more than one half of the *pauperism* and *crimes* which fill our state prisons, houses of correction, and alms houses, with immortal, though alas! degraded beings.

What then can be done? not much with a hope of success to reform the confirmed tipler, but a great deal to excite more interest in this most interesting subject, and by way of prevention (which is always better than a remedy) warn Fathers, Mothers, Masters, Brothers, and Sisters to take heed to their ways, and use all the influence they possess to save *themselves* and their dear *friends*, from the deadly poison of "ardent spirits."

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